

# **NEGOTIATING FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT IN ACEH PROVINCE, INDONESIA**

## **Notes on Process**



**OSRO/INS/601/ARC  
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE PROJECT**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**







# **NEGOTIATING FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT IN ACEH PROVINCE, INDONESIA**

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## **NOTES ON PROCESS**

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## **Preface**

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) with the financial assistance of the American Red Cross implemented a fisheries and aquaculture project in Aceh Province of Indonesia between 2007 and 2010. The focus of this project was on capacity building initiatives for a wide range of stakeholders involved in the sector. The aim was to facilitate the creation of a mind set which would be conducive for moving towards sustainable and responsible marine fishery and aquaculture practices. One of the components of this project aimed at instituting co-management arrangements in the coastal fisheries of four districts of Aceh which were the worst affected by the tsunami.

Conventional project reports most often focus on the tangible outputs of the project. These outputs are normally measured on a continuous basis through the life of the project using various monitoring and evaluation methods. These reports tell us what has been achieved during the life of the project. However, the process by which these outputs were achieved is not always clearly articulated. Detailing the process by which certain outputs are achieved can be a challenge as it requires a diachronic description of events. This is time and space consuming and often not relished by the readers. As a consequence, this usually gets left out by those who write project reports.

What we provide below is a compilation of notes about the process of negotiating fisheries co-management arrangements. These notes are unlikely to be included in the formal reports of the project. These notes are an attempt to reflect on “how we did it” and what were the approaches taken in doing so. The final output of the fisheries co-management component of the project was the formation of five co-management centres along four districts of west coast of Aceh covering about a third of that coast line. These notes will provide a brief understanding of the process by which this was achieved.

The first note (FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/1/2010) provides a brief summary of the strategy adopted and how it was implemented with respect to the three primary stakeholders involved in the co-management initiative – the coastal community; the fisher organisation and the officials of the fisheries department.

The next three notes (FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt 2-4/2010) are a more detailed elaboration of the way we went about getting each of the three stakeholder groups engaged into the process of negotiating the co-management arrangements. The final note (FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/5/2010) discusses briefly the role of women.

As these notes are about the same process, some repetition in their contents is inevitable.

FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/ 1/2010

## **Note On the Strategy Adopted for Negotiating Fisheries Co-Management in Aceh**

**F**isheries co-management refers to a partnership accord between the interest groups involved in the fisheries sector to negotiate a trustworthy process of sharing the rights and authority for responsible stewardship of fishery resources.

Negotiating fisheries co-management in Aceh required starting from a clean slate. This had its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage was that since there was little or no preconceived notions about it, people had a more open mind about its potentials and possibilities. The main disadvantage was that having little exposure to such ideas, the initiative required starting from square one with all stakeholders.

Given this context, the strategy adopted to negotiate fisheries co-management in Aceh had four elements: awareness creation; capacity building training; field action; and networking.

The key stakeholders which were identified included: the coastal community, in particular the youth representatives (called motivator masyarakat or MMs); the village leaders of the customary fisher organisation (Panglima Laot or PL); and the officers of the sea and fisheries department (Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan or DKP) of the province and the districts.

Our plan was to undertake activities in all four elements mentioned above for all three stakeholder groups.

This note attempts to give a brief summary of this process. More elaborate process notes relating to each of the stakeholder groups follow.

## COMMUNITY AND YOUTH

**Awareness creation** for the community commenced with preliminary visits by FAO staff to the districts for selective discussions with representative communities. This was followed by systematic discussions at the Lhok level (and in case of larger lhoks at the level of large desas) giving brochures; posters; having face to face discussions; using audio visual material to conduct discussions about fishery and coastal resources and their management. The most important of these sessions revolved around the selection of the youth from the village/lhok who would be sponsored for the community motivator trainings to be organised by the FAO. Linking awareness raising discussions with this concrete action was a good means to ensure that the talk and debates were not just academic but lead to action in the form of choice of representatives who would be future community contact persons on matters pertaining to fishery management issues.

**Capacity building training** focused on the selected youth. Since one youth was chosen from every coastal settlement (there are 160 such settlements) it was an inclusive approach to capacity building. No settlement was left out. This ensured that every settlement was seen to have an equal stake in the program. Whether this finally materialized after the training would depend largely on the interest of the youth and the settle-

ment which sponsored them. This training for community motivators focused on two main themes: fishery development and management knowledge and community organisation skills. The training was spread over 18 days. It was residential and held in the premises of



the state fisheries school. In each batch there were about 20-25 participants representing the four districts. There were seven such training sessions conducted and 164 persons were trained of which 33 were women.

Some follow-up training for gaining familiarity with information technology was organised in each district. As many as 60 of the 164 community motivators participated in these.

**Field action** initially consisted of organizing a variety of activities which would help strengthen the skills of the youth. They undertook participatory mapping of all the settlements. A children's painting competition was conducted. The community motivators were charged with the task of being



the main organizers of joint district level meetings which were intended to articulate each district's agenda for responsible fisheries. This was conducted in close collaboration with the Panglima Laot and the DKP of the district. During the Holy month of Ramadan the community motivators were encouraged to conduct 'breaking-the-fast' gatherings where audio-visuals about fisheries in other parts of the world were screened and discussed. Finally, those who were located in the area of operation of the co-management centres were closely involved in their formation and subsequent development. Apart from these initiatives which were facilitated by the FAO program, many of the community motivators became secretaries to the Panglima Laot; some continued fishing and related activities; some were commissioned by the DKP for a variety of assessment and survey related tasks; some joined local NGOs; others continued their studies; and some found work in other jobs in private sector and a few in government.

**Networking** of the community motivators was an important mission of the program. This was achieved initially by the monthly district-level follow-up meetings which were held while the trainings were in progress (January to August 2008). On completion of the whole cycle of training, all the trainees met together to discuss how they would be able to work together in the future to further the goals of responsible coastal and fisheries management in Aceh. At this meeting they proposed the formation of a Coastal Youth Forum which would basically function like an alumni association. They formed an organizational structure at the district and province level and were keen to formalize it as an NGO. However, this did not materialize. Ultimately, the Panglima Laot at the province level has decided to adopt the Forum as one of their 'feeder' organisations. In any training and follow-



up contact program, it would be wishful thinking to expect 100 percent participation of the original trainees. It is a matter of considerable success that 125 of the 164 continue to be actively involved in the program in one way or other and keep active contact with the FAO program staff. Of these, 27 are directly involved in the five current co-management centre activities. As many as 15 are fulltime fishers/fish traders/fish processors and therefore continue to be located in the villages and become key contact persons in the sector. As the idea of the co-management centres hopefully spread, more of the active community motivators will be drawn into the activities even after the completion of the FAO program. About 13 have taken up higher studies in the towns. Another 15 are working outside their villages in a variety of jobs.

## PANGLIMA LAOT

**Awareness creation** for the Panglima Laot started with preliminary meetings both at the provincial level and at the lhok (coastal settlement) levels. At the provincial level we facilitated the organisation of the bi-annual meeting of all 173 Panglima Laot in Aceh and presented our first note entitled: Fisheries Co-management: Is it Appropriate for Aceh? We also used this occasion to conduct a quick survey delving into aspects such as their opinions about the state of fishery resources and their opinion about working closely with DKP. This survey helped to obtain both the individual and collective view of the Panglima Laot. The lhok level contacts with individual Panglima Laot were achieved during our initiatives at creating links with the coastal communities in our efforts to get them to identify youth who could participate in a training course oriented to knowledge of fisheries and fisheries management and skills for community organisation. Here we

utilized brochures and posters and most importantly direct contact by our program staff to discuss the issue of co-management. Since the lhok level contacts



came after the first provincial level meetings and discussions, there was an important element of continuity in the process of awareness creation and dialogue on the issue of co-management. These contacts brought out the district-wise differences and specificities on questions such as the perception of the Panglima Laot regarding cooperation with the DKP. It also revealed that knowledge of customary law (adat laot) was inadequate in the case of those Panglima Laot who were elected after the tsunami, in the circumstances of the death of his predecessor.

**Capacity building training** with regard to the Panglima Laot at the lhok level consisted primarily in getting their close cooperation for selection of youth from their lhok who would attend the community motivator training. This process was an important measure to get the Panglima Laot involved with the larger coastal community and not just the skippers who elected them. Taking the lead to organize village meetings in collaboration with the village chief and leaders of other village organisations obliged them to situate their specific fishery interests in the context of the larger village issues. It is important to note that in the post-tsunami scenario many of the new Panglima Laot did not have many such occasions for such collective decision making.



At the provincial level, the capacity building training took the form of workshops to discuss topics such as the revival of the customary law as a necessary step for ensuring greater responsibility and involvement in fisheries management. These discussions

gave rise to the concern about ways and means by which customary law could be disseminated and strengthened. The use of film as a medium to create greater societal awareness about the adat laot and also for popularizing certain customary procedures received strong support. There were also collective hearings held to collate the views of the Panglima Laot from different parts of the province regarding the points to be included in the draft comprehensive fisheries law.

**Field action** program initiated with regard to the Panglima Laot was the production of the film 'Peujroh Laot'. The conundrum of how to popularize customary law without writing it down was partially solved by this approach. This film is about the significance of the adat laot and the adat court proceedings for conflict resolution – a key element for successful fisheries management. In this commercial film, the participation of the real Panglima Laot as key 'actors' facilitated the use of the film as a direct reference tool for reviving or popularizing the adat laot in any specific lhok. The huge commercial success of the film in Aceh bears testament to its appropriateness as a tool to spread customary practices for fisheries management in

Aceh. The selection of the film for an international fisheries film festival held in France speaks for its relevance to a wider audience.

**Networking** for the Panglima Laot was hardly necessary because of the four-tier organizational structure which they had built up over the years composed of the lhok, sub-district, district and provincial levels. However, our close involvements highlighted the lack of free flow of two-way communications across the nested organizational structure. This issue was flagged to the provincial leaders. Given the widespread use of cell phones and SMS as a means of communication, the use of communication technology for dissemination of key information both up and down the organizational tiers is a viable option. A project proposal to make this a reality was conceived but funding could not be made available by the FAO due to other commitments.

## DKP OFFICERS

**Awareness creation** for DKP officers was restricted to a small number of selected officers from the province and the districts – the chief and the head of the section of capture fisheries – and a few other government staff who were directly involved with fishery related activities at the province level. This took the form of a study trip to Malaysia that was intended to expose the officers to a real life context in fisheries which was socio-culturally and economically similar to their own in Aceh. The objective was to make the Acehnese officers alive to what was possible in the realm of fishery management in their own province/district. The tour was undoubtedly an eye-opener and created considerable enthusiasm about what was possible in Aceh. However, it is doubtful if those who participated ever made any effort to communicate the lessons learnt to others in the organisation. Moreover, within a year of the trip, five of the fourteen officers were transferred to other departments.



**Capacity building training** for DKP officers was restricted to two four-day sessions on basic fisheries and fisheries co-management. At these two sessions 37 officers from four districts and the province were trained. As there were 5 officers from the province; on average there were about 8 officers trained from each district. Since the latter were selected from across the whole range of the technical

hierarchy, there is greater chance for dissemination of the ideas within the organisation. Having interacted earlier with the officers it was very clear to us that much of the capacity building training had to focus on exploring their realms of ignorance, rather than their presumed realms of knowledge. Moreover, there were a significant number of officers who did not have any formal background in fisheries. This made it imperative to start from basics.

Since we were dealing with state officials who have a certain notion of their authority and their knowledge, it was necessary to handle with care the means by which we explore their realms of ignorance. Ignorance needed to be revealed without loss of self-esteem in front of colleagues. The pedagogy of the training was thus carefully oriented to methods of 'learning by collective discovery' to minimize puncturing self esteem and maximize learning of truths!



**Field action** was encouraged by promoting involvement in the organisation of the joint district meetings which were organised to articulate the district proposals for responsible fisheries. At these meetings, which were held before the co-management training, the DKP took the initiative in the organisation. However, our interaction with them on these occasions revealed very clearly their limited knowledge on fishery management issues. (This was one of the chief motivations for planning to have specific training in fisheries and co-management). Following the co-management training, the level of enthusiasm and informed participation of the DKP officers in identifying new co-management centres was crucial. They had formed small co-management teams in each district and the fact that all of them had participated in the training gave a common purpose and common understanding to their work. They were also seen to be collaborating very closely with the Panglima Laot and the community motivators. Real field action for co-management, in which all the three stakeholder

groups were fully involved, can be said to have commenced only after the DKP officers received their training.

Another major realm of field action was initiated in Aceh Barat with regard to the banning of mini-trawling. This action was largely initiated from a resolution of the Aceh Barat Parliament, which was subsequently taken up by the DKP of Aceh Barat and received full support from the FAO program. The DKP action got a boost when a new woman chief was appointed. Her enthusiasm was infectious and all the DKP staff members were committed to this cause. The DKP actions included joint action by navy, water police, Panglima laot and the community motivators, each playing a distinctive role, to support the campaign against trawling. Based on the FAO program's suggestion to institute exchange schemes for those who give up trawling, the district parliament provided funds for this. The majority of the fishers turned in their mini-trawls in exchange for selective gear.

The DKP of Aceh Barat with the collaboration of the FAO has taken the initiative to organise a regional workshop to assess the achievements made in moving towards responsible fisheries. The workshop will highlight the need for regulation, coordination and co-management. DKP chiefs from the southern districts of Aceh ( where the FAO program was not involved) will participate in order to collaborate on this issue in the future.

**Networking** efforts were enthusiastically suggested by the DKP officers during the co-management training. They were keen to form district co-management forums and then form a province wide linkage. The limitation of this was that only four districts were involved in the training and they do not form a critical mass to be able to have a province-wide forum.

## **END NOTE**

The FAO/UN program for co-management was structured to assist communities, fishers and the state to move towards working for fisheries co-management. The initial activities focused on awareness. Then the effort was on training. This was followed by field action. Finally there is the task of networking. While the sequencing of these activities is important, they are not in water-tight compartments. Awareness is essential in the initial stages; but new and heightened awareness also comes during the action and networking activities. Action may not be possible as the first activity. But action may reach a dead end and require further training in order to proceed ahead well. Networking must be relegated to the end, but it is also the great repository for new awareness and more dynamic collective action.

The efforts of undertaking awareness creation, capacity building training, field action and networking for the three main stakeholder groups has met with varying degrees

of success as will be apparent from the narrations provided above. However, the overall success of the strategy can be assessed at the five co-management centres which have been started along the coastline of the four districts of west Aceh. The degree to which these three stakeholder groups have been able to undertake joint action at these centres will be an appropriate indicator to be used to gauge the future potentials for co-management in Aceh.

**MATRIX OF FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT STAKEHOLDERS AND ACTIVITIES**

	<b>Awareness Creation</b>	<b>Capacity Building Training</b>	<b>Field Action</b>	<b>Networking</b>
<b>Coastal community (focus on youth and women)</b>	<p>Direct visits by FAO staff to all communities for face-to-face discussions; variety of brochures, posters and audio-visual materials are used to make contact.</p> <p>About 120 village meetings held for selection of youth for training. A coastal population of over 25,000 living along the four west coast districts of Aceh are reached.</p>	<p>Training of 164 Motivator Masyarakat (MM) in community organisation and fisheries development and management.</p> <p>Trainings organised for 50 women to encourage formation of credit and saving groups. Training in livelihood activities.</p>	<p>Series of field activities held in settlements by all 164 MMs. Most of them actively involved with Panglima Laot and several involved with DKP on fishery issues.</p> <p>Finally about 30 MMs associated with the formation of the five co-management centres.</p> <p>Two women's credit and savings groups formed involving about 70 women</p>	<p>Monthly meetings of MMs at district level. Formation of Forum Pemuda Pesisir Aceh (FP2A) which is now under the wings of the Panglima Laot Province</p>
<b>Fishers (contact through Panglima Laot)</b>	<p>At province level organisation of bi-annual meeting of all 173 Panglima Laot.</p> <p>At lhok level direct contact made with 33 PL with use of brochures and posters. They are closely involved with selection of the 164 youth for training.</p>	<p>Workshops held in west, south and east coast to discuss about customary law and co-management.</p> <p>Discussions held in seven centres in Aceh with respect to drafting of the province fisheries legislation. The main focus is on 33 PL of the four districts of west coast.</p>	<p>Many PL creatively involved with the making of the film on customary practices. About 25 PL are actively engaged with the coastal community on the west coast and 11 are involved in the initiative to form the five co-management centres in which about 2000 fishers are involved.</p>	<p>Already networked in Panglima Laot.</p> <p>But those involved with the five co-management centres are more closely involved horizontally across lhoks. This is a new relationship.</p>
<b>State (DKP officers)</b>	<p>Workshop on fisheries management between four coastal districts and province.</p> <p>Study tour to Malaysia for 14 senior officers from 4 districts and province.</p>	<p>Training in fisheries co-management for 40 officers from 4 districts and province</p>	<p>Of those trained 14 have linked up with the communities where the five co-management initiatives have commenced.</p>	<p>Discussions commenced about a province co-management forum to be coordinated by the DKP Province.</p>

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## Negotiating Fisheries Co-Management In Aceh, Indonesia: Working With Post-Tsunami Coastal Communities

### COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF ACEH

**T**he social, economic and religious life of coastal communities in Aceh take place in the jurisdictional boundaries of what is called the Lhok. The lhok is an ecological space usually composed of a marine coastline, beach sands, a bay, a river and/or estuary, lands with patches of coastal vegetation or shrubs and trees and small islands just of the coastline. A specific lhok can have all or a few of these characteristic natural realms. The populations which live in this jurisdiction congregate into smaller extended kinship based groups which form a settlement called a desa. There can be many desas in a lhok. The lhok can therefore be considered a distinct socio-ecological realm situated in the coastal tract of Aceh. The FAO program for fisheries



co-management was undertaken in four of the districts of west Aceh which were most affected by the tsunami – Aceh Besar, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Barat and Nagan Raya. These districts accounted for a coastline length of 390 kms. There are 160 desas incorporated into 33 lhoks along this stretch of coastline.



## COMMUNITIES AND THE TSUNAMI

The coastal communities of west Aceh were the most affected victims of the killer tsunami which struck the coast on the Sunday morning of 26th December 2004. The devastation and death was not uniform across the coast. It depended on many factors such as the slope of the continental shelf; the configuration of the coastline; the existence of estuaries and bays; the presence of small islands and coral reefs near the coast; the presence of mangroves and coastal forests; the distance of the habitation from the sea-front; the presence of high ground or hillocks near the houses and so on.

The composition of the final death toll also varied. In some villages more women and children were snatched by the waves. In some, more men died. In general older men, women and children were the victims.

The demographic disruption caused to the coastal population by the tsunami was pervasive. However, the amazing fact is that self re-organization of the community was rapid despite the huge tragedy. This became possible due to the deep rooted communitarian attitudes, a strong sense of justice bolstered by religious tenets of Islam and a long history of resilient village level social institutions. In combination this resulted in many important actions. First, wherever there was a case of a social or religious leader of the village having died in the tsunami, his/her position was filled by the appointment of a new person by election or consensus. Trusting an elected leader until he/she proves otherwise was a time-honored norm in these villages. Secondly, wherever it was possible, new family formations within each affected community were arranged by the elders in the community. Widowers married widows and took orphans as their children. Thirdly, the resources available for reconstruction were distributed largely on the basis of need and not on social position or other considerations. An innate moral sense of justice and fair play were key elements in this. [It should be mentioned that this refers only to the resources which were distributed through the village socio-religious institutions]. It is important to note that these decisions are taken in the common meeting space called the meunasah (usually situated near the mosque) at a gathering called a mushyawara (a meeting attended by all members of the community).



World over rural communities are attached to their physical space. This is usually at the base of their identity and their evolving social relationships. This space-time continuum is

what creates the sense of 'togetherness' and the 'we' feeling which remains below the surface of the social fabric in normal times. These sentiments are more demonstrably felt in times of crisis. The strong feeling of unity to their 'bounded reality' is not diminished even when many of their members are lost in a natural calamity. This was very evident in the post-tsunami coastal communities of Aceh. Even in contexts where more than half the families were lost in the tsunami and the land of the village swallowed by the sea, those who survived re-grouped and started life again – sometimes on a new physical space along the coast. They called their new settlement with the old village name. They put the horrible events behind them and moved ahead without remorse. They took the tsunami events not as God's punishment but rather as God's training!

## **WOMEN**

Women in coastal Aceh were seen to play an important role in village life. Unlike in many Islamic societies, they were not secluded in the four walls of their homes. Women are visible everywhere. Much of the service sector activities – the coffee shops; the restaurants; the fish processing activity; the petty trade; tailoring – are managed by the women. Women are normally the inheritors of the homes of their parents. Women are also surprisingly free in their social interactions. Their physical mobility is also considerable -- young and old ride motorbikes. Women also gather together for religious and social activities. Such associational arrangements provide an important basis for gender equality. In the post-tsunami period many of the families hold joint titles to their land and houses.



## **RELIGION**

Religion is central to coastal village life as it is with the rest of Aceh. The mosque is the unifying structure of the new villages. The imam is well respected and is a part of essential village life. However, he does not play any special role in any of the other social or administrative activities of the village by virtue of this religious position. He is likely to have his own secular occupation. The meunasah adjacent to the mosque is the meeting space for collective social activities. It is free to be utilized by all. The open wooden architectural

structure (some are built of brick) makes for an airy social space which innately helps to foster greater transparency. In daily life the sacred and the secular seem to merge without contradiction.

## FISHERIES

Coastal fishing and the related post-harvest activities are key livelihood sources in these coastal settlements. However, they are always accompanied by agricultural, horticultural, petty trade and other service sector jobs. Multiple occupational pursuits are widespread in many coastal communities. Active fishers rarely account for more than a quarter of the active working population. Coastal fishing is organised and regulated almost entirely by customary practices which play a crucial role in the choice of fishing technology, crew formation, regulation of fishing activity at sea, norms of distribution of earnings from fishing, coastal conservation, conflict resolution and so on. The customary institution is named after its elected leader – Panglima Laot (Sea Commander). The lhok is the jurisdiction of the Panglima Laot. Every lhok therefore evolves its own set of unwritten customs with regard to the practices mentioned above. While they may be broadly similar across lhoks, there can be nuances which are specific to any given lhok.



For example a lhok which has a river and estuary may have norms about how, where and when boats can be docked on the river. A lhok which has small islands off the coast may set up a no-fishing zone and evolve regulations related to it.

Fishing is conducted based on the two main monsoon seasons – west and north. The majority of the boats are shore (lhok) based and use multiple fishing gear – hook and line, encircling nets, gill nets and drift nets. Most of the fish and marine products are currently locally consumed. This is primarily due to the present lack of ice and poor infrastructure facilities such as good roads connecting to markets. Some varieties such as lobsters, prawns and large reef fishes do command a market outside the province. The post-harvest activity – mainly drying – is carried out by women. The fish transaction at the lhok are controlled by financiers – *toke bangku* -- and the trade dominated by small traders – *muge*.

## INTRODUCING THE FAO/UN PROGRAM

It was into such communities that the FAO program began to interact with ideas such as the need to conserve coastal resources for the future; the concept of fisheries co-management; the call for youth to be trained in



community organisation skills and fisheries; and the need to preserve the *adat laot* (custom based practices of the sea).

In April 2007 a team of the FAO made its first field visit to the west coast to familiarize ourselves with the ground realities and make a few random visits to villages on the way. We started from the districts of Nagan Raya and Aceh Barat and drove up the coastal road through Aceh Jaya and into Aceh Besar before getting back to Banda Aceh. We were accompanied by the Head of Administration from the DKP Province. This visit permitted us to get a feel of what the people and the fisheries administrations considered to be the priorities of the time --- after two full years of post-tsunami relief and rehabilitation programs.



We were able to make face to face contact with DKP chiefs, village officers, fishers, community elders, youth and women. One salient and recurring sentiment so often mentioned by the various groups was the need for a greater degree of permanence in the contacts and work done by external agencies. The need for follow-up after the initiation of a program in a village was also highlighted. We took note of these issues and requested a few representatives of the different interest groups whom we met to come to Banda Aceh for the inception phase workshop of the FAO program to be held in May 2007. The idea was to establish this permanence in relationships and get some good feedback from the field.

The Inception Workshop in May 2007 was attended by several of the persons we met on our trip. This opportunity to link up again, helped to lay the ground for a more trusted relationship. The feedback we received was invaluable. It helped to rework the co-management program proposal significantly. It was altered to adopt a more 'inclusive' approach in the work with the coastal communities. We decided to accept the challenge of relating to all the 160 coastal communities in our area of work (four districts) rather than selecting just a few to undertake a more focused and concentrated program. The idea of having a trained 'point-person' in each village was acceptable. This was the origin of the idea of youth community motivators.

## COMMENCING CONTACTS

Initially the FAO district coordinators were assigned to discuss with the communities about the proposed training for the community motivators -- called *motivator masyarakat* (MM). The concept of the MM was introduced to the community at a special lhok/village level *mushawara* called up for this purpose. Such full-quorum village meetings are usually led by the formal village leader (*keuchik*) or the informal leaders (*mukim*). Other persons such as the *panglima laot* (Sea commander) who is the head of the customary fisher organisation by the same name; the leader of the women's organisation and the head of the youth organisation also participate. The imam of the mosque usually attends in his capacity as a member of the village. The proposition to the lhok/village was that they should select a young person who could represent their village at the 18 day training of "Youth for Responsible Fisheries". The criteria for selection were the following: the person should be from a fishing family; aged between 18 and 25; and educated up to high school. The village was free to add on any other criteria they wished in the selection process. Generally a list of all those young men and women who fulfilled the base criteria was drawn up. Thereafter, in order to narrow down the list, other criteria, agreed to by consensus, were added. For example, in some villages, youth with a history of involvement in village social activities were given priority. In some others, tsunami orphans were given a preference.

## SELECTING THE YOUTH

These village meetings, held to select the youth who would attend the FAO training became the 'entry point' for discussion on issues relating to coastal fisheries. Initially, the response from the community was invariably in the form of requests for more assistance in the form of boats and nets; or alternatively in the form of complaints about assistance received/promised from various agencies including the FAO. The staff was often hard pressed to provide explanations for the issues raised. Their tack was to point out that this was not an FAO project involved with any distribution of 'hard ware' for the fisheries. It was a program primarily focused on raising the knowledge capabilities of the community, the fisher organisation and the state so that they could work jointly towards managing the coastal fishery resources.

The discussion about training also raised serious doubts in the minds of many at several of the meetings. They questioned the use of training. They pointed to the numerous agen-

cies who had come to the villages and taken youth and others for a variety of 2 and 3 day training programs on a wide range of subjects such and boat building; accounting; enterprise development; formation of self-help groups; skill training; environmental awareness; community organisation; disaster management etc. The list was endless. How was all this training adding to the prospects for livelihood in the community? What was the basis of the selection? What was the quality of the training? People remarked that the only immediate benefit was the food and per diem which they received during the few days they spent at the training centre. Once the training was over there was no further contact with the agency. No follow-up. Against this background what is the utility of more training?

Our response to this list of valid points was that we would not make the selection and that it was up to the village to select the person who should attend the FAO training. Our training was residential and for 18 days. It would be held in the government fisheries school making it possible to provide a greater level of knowledge and awareness when compared to short programs. We made it clear that we did not intend to offer any employment to the trainees after the training. However we promised that we would continue to keep contact with them and offer them small assignments at the village level for which we would compensate them for their time. Our training was part of the larger program of fisheries co-management in which the coastal community had a keen interest. Moreover the FAO program's connections with the Panglima Laot, were an important link which was already established. Therefore, the training for the youth would be more organically connected with an important occupational pursuit of the village.

We made it a point to ensure that our staff makes their approach to all the village leaders and elders offering both verbal explanations and written material in a direct and candid manner. The emphasis on a transparent selection process undertaken by the community with mutually agreed criteria for selection was mentioned by many village leaders to be their first encounter of this sort with an external agency. It is important to mention that we conducted such interactions in every single one of the 33 lhoks and in as many as 24 of the larger *desas* within these lhoks.

We in the FAO viewed this selection process as an efficient procedure to minimize 'adverse selection' problems. It would also ensure a mutual responsibility between the selected candidate and the village. The community however interpreted it differently. They viewed it as an implicit sign of trust in their ability to make the right selection of candidates for the training. In the eyes of the coastal community the FAO program was viewed to have greater credibility. For FAO, the social capital in the form of trust, which we accumulated in this process, was a very important asset for the future work

## **TRAINING THE YOUTH**

This selection procedure also had other important merits which need to be highlighted. It creates reciprocal rights and responsibility between the chosen candi-

date and the community. Having been chosen by the community (from among several contenders) the youth obtained a legitimate right to attend the training and in turn fulfilled her/his responsibility to the community. On the part of the community, when the youth returned to the village, they considered it their right and their responsibility to ensure that s/he take initiative to utilize the learning from the training to the benefit of the community. The facilitating role of the FAO staff lies at the intersection of the rights and responsibilities of the youth candidate and that of the community. Having provided the training, it was our mandate to ensure that the candidate uses her skills in the community and for the community. Considering that our long-term objective was in working with the coastal community as a whole, it was in our interest to ensure that the community demands and also benefits from the knowledge of the youth they sponsored for the training and in turn supports her in providing that service.

Having trained one community motivator (MM) from each of the 160 coastal settlements (desa) in the four western districts, we had a dedicated and knowledgeable contact person who was a true representative of the settlement. Our spatial realm of reference in the work



was the lhok, which is composed of many coastal settlements. Each lhok thus had a group of MMs who were alumni of our training course. Of the 33 lhoks along the west coast only in 2 was there just one MM. In 25 lhoks there were between 2 and 5; in five lhoks between 5 and 10 and in two lhoks even above 10 MMs. This group affinity among the MMs became the starting point for networking and for creation of a sense of unity between settlements in a given lhok. It is not that such unity was non-existent earlier. Rather, it was greatly strengthened through the camaraderie of MMs motivated by a common purpose.

## **MOVING FOR ACTION**

The first concrete action which we undertook following the completion of the whole MM training program (it was spread over 7 months) was the creation of participatory village maps for each lhok. This achieved two important results. First, it helped to reinforce the learning of making maps which was briefly imparted in the training. Secondly, it became the basis for getting several members of the lhok from the different settlements to involve in a collective task. Participatory mapping is a technique which creates considerable

bonding between people because there are several types of skills which need to be pooled together to make the map. It also helps rural people to 'discover' skills which they did not know they had – the ability to visualize three-dimensional space onto two-dimensional paper; the ability to draw; the ability to conceptualize scale; the artistic flair and so on. The 'unity dividend' of the exercise was quite considerable, even though some of the maps were not of a particularly high standard.

The second action focused on honing the organizational ability of the MMs. They were given the task of organizing a children's painting competition on the anniversary of Peace Day – the day when the Helsinki Peace Agreement was signed. *[The Helsinki Agreement was signed between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia on 15 August 2004 marking the end of three decades of conflict. The agreement was brokered in Helsinki by the former Prime Minister of Finland Marti Ahtisari].* The theme of the competition was "Peace for the Sea. Fish for All". The MMs were requested to identify someone in their lhok who could talk to the children about the significance of the Agreement before they commenced their painting. Making the link between the fisheries management program and the political peace in Aceh was important. The coastal community needed to appreciate that peace was not only about the cessation of conflict in Aceh. Peace is also about harmonious and non-destructive relationships with the natural resources such as the sea and its wealth over which the people of Aceh received greater control as a consequence of the Helsinki Agreement. The painting competition was a great success in that we were able to get over 2500 paintings from children between the ages of 10-12. Many of the painters were tsunami orphans and this was an occasion for them to express their inner feelings. *(A sample of these painting is on permanent display at the newly built Tsunami Museum in Banda Aceh. Prints of the paintings were used by the program as greeting cards and framed to make corporate gifts)*

The third action taken in the community was the creation of the community human resource register. The idea was to get the MMs to identify the persons in the community who have special skills, to meet them and to record the nature of their skills. These actions were intended to give recognition to members of the community (generally they are older persons) who have very valuable occupational, traditional and customary knowledge that is often not adequately recognized and valorized. In much of modern day development work, it is only the physical assets which are counted and valued. Through this interaction, the MMs were encouraged to become aware of this important human asset in their village. It also helped to involve the elderly into our activities. In a society where elders are given special respect, their inclusion into the activities became mutually beneficial.

The fourth collective action which we organized was the district level joint meetings between the community, the Panglima Laot and the state (primarily the marine and fisheries department). This was the first occasion when such a structured interaction was taking place focusing on the future of coastal fisheries. At the four district level meetings the participation by representatives of the three prime stakeholder groups was as follows:



Community Members including MMs: 210  
 Panglima Laot and fishers: 72  
 State Fishery Officers: 37

The purpose of these meetings was to bring together the key stakeholders to discuss the main issues faced by them in fisheries and coastal management. The theme of these meetings was “Working Together for Responsible Fisheries: Joint Action for Fisheries Co-Management in Aceh”

The fifth widespread action related to exposing the community to fishery development and management issues around the world. This was facilitated with the aid of audio visual material obtained from FAO Rome pertaining to a variety of fishery situations in different continents. We chose the Holy month of Ramadan for viewing of this material in the village. There is a tradition of hosting an evening breaking-of-the-fast meal (*buka puasa*) which is an occasion for a social gathering after a long day of regular work, fasting and prayer. We arranged to host this meal. This meal is followed by rest and relaxation. During this time we are able to get the undivided attention of the community. Viewing issues about fisheries in other parts of the world stimulates heated discussions about the presence or absence of similar issues in Aceh. The debate is then guided with facilitation by the MMs or the FAO district coordinators. The experience has been that one’s own context can be better discussed in relation to the context of others. This facilitates comparisons of similarities and differences. It also tends to be more self-critical and less self-adulating. Over 1200 persons participated in these discussions during the Ramadan of 2008.



## NEGOTIATING CO-MANAGEMENT

The menu of efforts enunciated above to get closer to the coastal communities and fathom their unique natural and human resources were important measures which helped to select and diffuse the idea of creating fisheries co-management centres. The initiatives for concrete co-management action in five centres between October 2009 and May 2010

however covered only 11 lhoks (one-third of the total) which accounted for only 38 *desas* (a quarter of the total). These five centres were chosen through a combination of direct requests from MMs; choice of locations following requests from the Panglima Laot; and suggestions from the DKP officers in the district following their training in fisheries co-management.

In the co-management centres the community, the fishers and the state worked closely together. The effort of the program was to strengthen the social health of the community in order that this would yield the efforts to work towards a healthy eco-system and resource. This fact is not adequately appreciated in fisheries management efforts. Only socially healthy and vibrant communities can make fisheries management effective. They give bounded legitimacy to the efforts at co-management.

Post-tsunami communities in Aceh, despite all the positive attributes described above, are communities which were physically and socially broken by the tsunami. The recovery -- physical, economic and socio-cultural -- has been rapid. It is their strong religious faith and long practiced cultural traditions which have helped them to cement the community together in this big crisis and largely avoid the phenomenon of 'community failure'.

Communities which have experienced such major devastation need structured opportunities to work together towards common goals in order to regain their confidence and test their abilities. It is wishful thinking to imagine that communities will always self-organize or that they will be able to 'stand their ground' in the face of multiple pressures from a variety of interests groups. Therefore communities need support from 'outside' to achieve their goals.

## **END NOTE**

Interacting with post-tsunami coastal communities has been a challenging task. Each community is unique. They have their own history and their visions for the tasks ahead. Each has their singular collective capabilities and weaknesses. We realized that making generalisations about this past and future is fraught with innumerable hurdles. This was the rationale for making an inclusive approach by offering to train youth from every single settlement along the coast. The selection process for this training put back the onus on the community if they wished to make further contacts with the FAO program on co-management. We have provided the motivation and knowledge for co-management. It is now for the communities to respond if they desire action on the ground. Three years of involvement is clearly inadequate for fostering a wave of enthusiasm for co-management. However, the exuberance in the five co-management centres which have taken root over the last 12 months offers more than a glimmer of hope.

FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/3/2010

## Negotiating Fisheries Co-Management In Aceh, Indonesia: Working With the Fisher Organisation -- Panglima Laot

Fishers are the prime stakeholders in any fisheries co-management program. When efforts are made to introduce co-management across a wide area, working with a fisher organisation has its great merits. In many developing regions of the world such organisations do exist. However, most of them have limited reach and often they are structures which have been created by NGOs, political parties, the state or by a group of well meaning fishers.

When these organisations are genuine in their representation of fishers, they tend to be spatially restricted to a few village or districts. When these organisations claim coverage of a whole province or country they usually tend to have been created from above, are 'representational' in structure and have little genuine participatory involvement from the fishers in the real fishing villages.

Fisher organisations which have both the genuine participatory representation of fishers at the village level and can also legitimately claim representational structures which cover a whole province or state are indeed few in developing fishing nations. Aceh Province of Indonesia with a coastline length of about 1700 km and a fisher population of 100,000 can lay claim to be one of the few regions of the developing world where such an organisation – called the Panglima Laot ( Sea Commander) exists.

It was initiated in the 16th century by the Sultan of Aceh as a village based coastal protection institution. Today the Panglima Laot has transformed into a custom based fisher organisation which functions at three levels -- at the coastal settlement called the *lhok* and with an elected representational structure at the district and the province level. For most of the 400 years



of its existence, the Panglima Laot remained a horizontal organisation – there was only the lhok level. Each lhok had its own distinct identity and autonomy. The common link was the broad tenets of the customary law of the sea – *hukom adat laot*. The organisation can be pictured as a necklace comprised of beads of different size and shape representing each lhok and the thread stringing them together the customary law. The district and province level of the organisation were creations of the last two decades.

Given the differential vintage of the levels of this nested organisation, it is not surprising that the lhok level continues to be the most important. When required, information and requests move ‘up the hierarchy’ rather rapidly. However, the flow of information and requests ‘down the hierarchy’ is much less frequent. Passing orders ‘down the hierarchy’ is non-existent for the simple reason that the lhok continues to be a truly autonomous entity and takes orders from none.

## FAO/UN CONTACTS WITH PANGLIMA LAOT

The post-tsunami experience of FAO consultants dealing with relief and rehabilitation issues in Aceh’s fisheries produced a rather mixed bag of opinions about the Panglima Laot. There was a tendency to identify the organisation with one individual – the Secretary General of the Provincial tier of the organisation. As a lawyer, entrepreneur and perhaps the only one who could speak English in the organisation, it was but natural for most consultants who arrived in Banda Aceh, and wished to have direct dealing with the fishers, to approach him. He was the spokesperson for the whole network. He spoke for the interests of the Panglima Laot as a whole. There were other consultants – particularly those who spoke Bahasa Indonesia -- who went directly to a lhok and made their first encounters with the Panglima Laot of that particular lhok. Some other consultants went directly to the fishers totally oblivious of the presence of the Panglima Laot. The end result was a bit like the Indian story of the blind men and the elephant. Each one described the Panglima Laot based on their particular and limited encounter. For those who met the Secretary-General the Panglima Laot was a hierarchical organisation which represented the fishers of Aceh as a whole. Those who met the Panglima Laot at a lhok viewed him as a village representative through whom to contact the fishers. Those who did neither viewed the Panglima Laot to be at best a necessary evil, and at worst a middleman who prevented direct access to the true beneficiaries.

Against this background the advice given to the FAO program about working with the Panglima Laot was at best ambiguous. We were told to take them into consideration but that it was not necessary to work only with them.

## INITIAL FORAYS

Our initial strategy in the FAO co-management program was to visit the coastal villages along the west coast to get a first hand visual understanding of the fishery and to hold discussions with a cross section of people in the coastal villages. The Panglima Laot of a lhok was one of the persons we always met. We were able to gather a lot of information from them about their views on the manner in which tsunami aid was distributed in the lhoks. During this initial visit we also held lengthy discussions with the west-coast coordinator of the Panglima Laot who was also a member of the top-tier provincial committee of the institution. One important insight we got from this meeting was expressed in the sentiment expressed by him – “You don’t have to always work through us. But always keep us informed about what you plan to do. We may have some views on it”

These extensive lhok-level visits were followed by informal discussions with the Secretary-General and a reporting to him of our experiences during the trip to the west coast. We explained the human capacity building focus of our program. Much of the discussion focused on the views of the Panglima Laot about the future of coastal fisheries in Aceh and the role of customary law in fostering sustainable fisheries. We raised the issue of fisheries co-management and the feasibility of this in Aceh. This prompted the response that if co-management was to be implemented there was need for greater awareness about its implications and also a consensus about the strategy for its implementation. We were appraised about the tensions which had developed between the government and the Panglima Laot about the manner in which post-tsunami aid was distributed without proper consultation with them. They pointed to the numerous mistakes made as a result of this rather anarchic and un-coordinated distribution of fishing assets. They also highlighted how some NGOs, international agencies and financial institutions, by making direct and differentiated approaches to aid delivery, created tensions between the Panglima Laot of different lhoks.



This initial discussion at the provincial level made it abundantly clear that any efforts to introduce new ideas into coastal fishing in Aceh had to be done contemporaneously at the level of the lhok and the province – a micro and ‘global’ focus at the same time. With this in mind we explored the possibility of engaging the Panglima Laot at the provincial level to associate with our efforts to introduce the idea of fisheries co-management in Aceh. This included supporting the bi-annual congress of the Panglima Laot where all 173 of the members from the lhoks would gather together in Banda Aceh.

## THE CONGRESS

The December 2007 Congress of the Panglima Laot provided us with the occasion to broach the topic of fisheries co-management by making a presentation titled: Fisheries Co-Management: Is it Appropriate for Aceh?” The congress also provided the unique opportunity to conduct an opinion survey among the individual Panglima Laot on matters such as their opinion regarding working with the state; the role of customary law; the state of the marine resources post-tsunami etc. Through this survey we would get both the individual and the collective views and the possibility for assessing if there were spatial (regional) variations in these opinions which deserved closer attention and follow-up.



The Congress also discussed the increase incidence of illegal and destructive fishing in the post-tsunami period and the diminishing respect for the customary law. There was also discussion on the lack of knowledge of the customary law on the part of many younger Panglima Laot who were elected in the post-tsunami period following the death of their elder predecessors.

The Congress thus gave us an understanding of the way this unique customary network functions – in particular their decorum, the freedom for expression and the consensus approach to decision making. Our presence provided occasion to get to know many of the individual Panglima Laot – particularly those along the west coast where we planned to focus our efforts for co-management.

The Congress declared that the Panglima Laot was committed to sustainable and responsible fisheries in Aceh. They declared their antagonism to trawling and requested the state to take firm action against trawlers which came from outside Aceh. The Congress also welcomed the decision of FAO to work of issues which were of concern to the Panglima Laot and offered cooperation in the work of FAO if such requests were made.

## CLOSER INTERACTIONS

The period following the Congress led to closer cooperation. A group of supporters of the Panglima Laot, working in tandem with the Provincial office of the Panglima Laot, assisted in the production of a calendar for 2008 which was widely distributed by the individual Panglima Laot all along the coast. Most of the coffee shops along the coast had it well displayed with its striking fishery pictures and Acehnese couplets on conservation. This group also produced a few posters which were utilized as part of our preliminary awareness campaign along the coast. Some of the wordings of the posters are given below:

- The sea is not sustainable if forests continue to be denuded
- Greed leads to extinction
- If the sea was initially protected there would be no cause for regret later.
- Plant mangroves today to save our world tomorrow



The Panglima Laot also produced a document to highlight that the legal basis for supporting co-management of the fishery already exists in Aceh based on several Qanuns issued by the Government of Aceh prior to the new Law on Governance of Aceh (LOGA). These legal enactments coupled with the socio-economic and cultural background in the coastal areas provide a favourable basis for co-management. The physical realms in which co-management can take place were also spelt out. These included the following: The sea front (pinggir pantai/Bineh pasi); the bay (teluk/lhok); the river (sungai/krueng); the fish landing centre (teupin)the coastal forest (hutan pantai/uteun pasi); the casuarina forest (hutan cemara/uteun aron); mangrove forest (hutan mangrove/uteun bangka); the fish-ponds (Tambak/ neuheun); the salt production area (ladang garam).

In January 2008, following many discussions and a closer relationship with the Secretary-General, we proposed to him that he may wish to join our FAO team to help with the process of negotiating fisheries co-management arrangements. After some thought and

discussions with his colleagues he agreed. This was an important and strategic move to get the support of the Panglima Laot for our program.

In March 2008 we conducted a meeting of all the Panglima Laot of the West Coast in the town of Calang. The objective was three-fold: to hold discussions about the hukum adat laot; to explain to the Panglima Laot the details of the co-management plan; and to formally request their cooperation in selection of youth from coastal communities who would be trained in community organisation and fisheries management. We explained that these youth will play a lead in re-linking the PL to the larger coastal community. At this meeting many of the newly elected Panglima Laot (who replaced those who died in the tsunami) expressed the fact that they were not aware of all the aspects of the hukum adat and requested for assistance to fill this lacunae.

Similar meetings were held in Singkil (South Coast) and Langsa (East Coast). At the latter meeting the Chief of the Marine and Fisheries Service (DKP) of Aceh also participated along with the head of the Navy responsible for the East Coast. Both reiterated support to the Panglima Laot in their efforts at fisheries management

## **WORKING WITH THE MOTIVATOR MASYARAKAT (MM)**

The Panglima Laot, along with other village leaders, were involved in the selection of all the 164 candidates for the Motivator Masyarakat (MM) training held between January and August 2008. However, as the purpose of the training was to create a cadre of coastal youth for responsible fisheries, the role of the Panglima Laot was more central in the selection process. This aspect was not missed by the Panglima Laot. They took special interest in the process which commenced with a village meeting organised by the project district coordinators. At this meeting the community was informed about the objectives of the training and how it relates to the larger goal of fisheries co-management.

Following the completion of the MM training in August 2008, the Panglima Laot along the west coast collaborated closely with the MMs to organize the children's painting competition in their respective lhoks on August 15. They also collaborated with the MMs and the DKP in organizing the district level meetings for discussions about district priorities for fisheries co-management in late August 2008. On this occasion the prizes for the painting competition were distributed. This provided the platform for a wider involvement of the larger coastal community in these meetings with the children and the parents attending.

Another development at this time was the request from DKP Province for assistance from FAO to help in drafting a Provincial Fisheries Law. We agreed to facilitate on condition that the process of drafting was based on wide stakeholder discussions. When this was agreed, the role of the Panglima Laot in organizing these meetings held in 7 centres around Aceh became crucial. The DKP district



and the Panglima Laot supported by the MMs were again co-responsible for helping the law drafting team to organize the stakeholder consultations regarding what should be included in the new proposed law.

In many lhoks the MMs have become the informal 'secretaries' of the Panglima Laot. With the training they received, they are fully equipped to assist the Panglima Laot to engage more closely and consistently with the fishers and the larger coastal community. This has been widely appreciated by the Panglima Laot who are grateful to get such support in their voluntary work. On the part of the MMs they are putting into practice the strong message which they received in their training by the FAO -- that the Panglima Laot must reinvent itself in the context of a new Aceh if they are to remain the flag bearers for a sustainable and responsible fishery in Aceh.

## **TRAWL BAN: ECONOMICS AND POLITICS**

In September 2008 a meeting was called for by the DKP of Aceh Barat to discuss the issue of mini-trawling and the need for banning the same. The DKP Aceh Barat requested the assistance of the FAO for organizing the meeting. They also invited the Province PL and all the PL of the district to participate. The Provincial Marine Police Chief was also invited for the meeting; as also the Navy commander in Aceh Barat. All this was in the light of the MUPIDA (Public Order) issued by the Aceh Barat Parliament that all fishers should stop using mini-trawls by October 2008. This meeting brought to light the 'split' in the PL in Aceh Barat on this issue. It was evident that strong support for mini-trawling came from the traders who benefited the most from its operations. However, the Provincial Head of the Panglima Laot insisted that there should be a meeting of all the Panglima Laot of the district in order to discuss why there should be any resistance at all from the Panglima Laot for a ban on mini-trawls. This was particularly relevant given that the December 2007 bi-annual meeting had passed a unanimous decision, which needed to be abided by all, to ban all forms of trawling. This meeting of the Panglima Laot, which was held in the DKP office, helped to clear misunderstandings between the two groups of Panglima Laot over local leadership issues and helped create a consensus on the matter. However, as some Panglima Laot owned mini-trawls, it was not easy to resolve the matter on the ground without some form of compensation and a clearer understanding about the reasons for the introduction and spread of this destructive fishing technique in Aceh Barat after the tsunami.

Following this meeting the FAO Co-Management team made a preliminary assessment of the origins and the economics of mini-trawling and the extent of its practice in Aceh Barat. This was basically to understand the political economy of the practice and to assess the socio-economic implications of the ban. Based on this assessment an article was published in the popular province newspaper 'Serembi'. The article gave the ecological reasoning behind the need for a mini-trawl ban; explained why this would be difficult to achieve because of its lucrative returns; suggested what needs to be done to take such a ban to its logical conclusion and thus move firmly towards responsible fishing in Aceh Barat. The article advocated a stringent ban and a state funded scheme for exchange of mini-trawls for more selective and passive fishing gear.

In October 2008 the chief of the DKP of Aceh Barat was transferred. He was replaced by a woman. She immediately took up the trawl ban issue as it was an order of the district parliament. She also worked to make the suggestions in the article a reality and planned for an exchange scheme for a tune of IDR 850 million to be funded by the parliament. A dead-line was set for exchange of the mini-trawls with selective gillnets and hook and line sets.



The Panglima Laot in some of the sub-districts wholeheartedly endorsed this move and came out openly in support. Some others, although they had all signed the order banning the mini-trawl, were reluctant to make any open campaign. This was partly for fear of losing support of the pawangs (skippers) who were using mini-trawls and partly because some of the Panglima Laot were directly involved in the mini-trawling.

The exchange scheme was only partly successful because of the boycott by fishers in one major fishing centre and the inability of the Panglima Laot there to convince them about it. This created the grounds for punitive action by the marine police. Delinquent fishers were arrested to show that the law would be enforced on offenders.

With the arrests in Aceh Barat, the delinquent mini-trawlers moved their operations to the contiguous districts of Nagan Raya and Aceh Barat Daya. The problem thus attained inter-district proportions and more Panglima Laot began to get involved in the issue. The Panglima Laot in Nagan Raya took up the issue with their district DKP and the district parliament. They wanted the issue of mini-trawling addressed in the same manner as done by Aceh Barat --appeals; exchange programs; law enforcement. The FAO used this situation to raise the issue of inter-district coordination for fisheries management wherever the issue of illegal and destructive fishing was discussed.

This process of mini-trawl banning took well over one year from October 2008 to January 2010 before some of the subterranean socio-political polarization between the pro and the anti-trawl groups spilled out onto the streets in the form of demonstrations in front of the parliament in Aceh Barat. The pro-lobby started first. They were able to rope in some student activists to speak on their behalf. This prompted action by the vast majority of the coastal community who were against the ill effects of mini-trawling. The huge turn out at the demonstration of the fishers and the ordinary coastal community, without any supporters from

the outside, left little doubt in the minds of the members of parliament as to which side they should support! It was also clear that the Panglima Laot continued to be divided on this matter despite earlier efforts for consensus.

## FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT ACTION

Parallel to the events related to the campaign against mini-trawling there were already suggestions from various quarters about the suitable lhoks where fisheries co-management action could begin. The first place selected for such co-management action was Lhok Rigah in Aceh Jaya District. The site was ideal. The lhok had a large bay with islands in the middle and many fisher communities living along the coastline. The initiative for co-management here was first taken by the MM and the Keuchik – not the Panglima Laot. The attempt to involve the Panglima Laot created the first direct ‘stir’ in the community where they expressed displeasure with the actions and attitude of their newly elected young Panglima Laot. The FAO community organizer intervened and created the conditions for clearing the air of suspicion which had arisen due to a misunderstanding about tsunami assistance. The facilitative role of the community organizer was crucial because there had to be a neutral “ice breaker” to clear up the misunderstanding. The Panglima Laot soon regained the confidence of his community and began to be more proactively involved in the plans for initiating co-management efforts in the bay.

The work in Lhok Rigah gradually evolved. In a few months it actively involved the fishers, the wider community, the Panglima Laot, and some officers of the Tourist Department and the DKP of Aceh Jaya. The Bupati of the district was very supportive of the community efforts to protect the bay and the small islands within it from destructive fishing. The FAO organised training for coral replantation techniques for a multi-stakeholder group including an official from the tourist department, an MM from the lhok and young fishers. This gave a shot in the arm for the conservation efforts around the small islands in the bay. The Panglima Laot was now actively involved and offered his boat for regular use in transportation of the cement slabs and other material used in the coral transplantation. The recognition and attention which Lhok Rigah was receiving from the world outside dawned well on the PL. The active involvement of the state; the attention



from the FAO; the gradual interest being taken by the women of the community; and the re-focusing of interest once again in fisheries as a wholesome and viable occupation in the post-tsunami era gave the Panglima Laot a new perspective on his role and responsibilities.

## **FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT SPREADS**

The initiatives for starting co-management centres in the other districts were spearheaded by the Panglima Laot of the respective lhoks. Though the circumstance in each lhok where the idea was mooted was rather different, the enthusiasm and the dedication of the respective Panglima Laot was undoubtedly the prime motivator for the initiative. In each of the lhoks the collaboration between the MMs and the Panglima Laot was also a crucial element in getting the involvement of the DKP and the other state officials.



In Aceh Barat where the anti-trawl campaign was at its peak, the lhok which took the initiative for co-management was Lhok Meuroboh. In this lhok the Panglima Laot was a seasoned skipper, former army personnel and member of the 'old school' which firmly believed that the customary law needed to be respected and strengthened. He takes the credit of having convinced his fisher colleagues, as early as 2005, to abhor the mini-trawl and stick to selective fishing methods such as gillnetting and hook and line. In the context where many other villages had taken to mini-trawling, making much money while ruining the resources of the future, Lhok Meuroboh remained the only village in Aceh Besar not to have

even a single fisher operating a mini-trawl. The DKP in Aceh Barat which had taken on the anti-trawl campaign were therefore more than eager to partner with Lhok Meuroboh to start a co-management initiative. The MMs in the lhok were also very enthusiastic and soon the women folk also joined by forming their own group to support the initiative.

In Aceh Besar the co-management initiative in Lhok Lampuuk was led by the Panglima Laot, with the full support of the MMs. Being a peri-urban location, the coast was an important local tourist spot. Consequently the stakeholders concerned about the sea included those involved in the tourist trade. The effort to plant trees along the coastline had the department of forest officers involved. The location of a cement factory close to the Lhok introduced another dimension. It

provides employment to many in the Lhok and the factory was keen to take up some corporate social responsibility work in the Lhok. Initially the DKP officers were not very involved partly due to the great distance of their office from the coast (about 50 kms) and the focus of their development efforts on inland fisheries. However, after the fisheries co-management training offered to the DKP staff, they became more pro-active in their concerns with marine fisheries. However, it is the interest and the perseverance of the Panglima Laot which keeps this diverse group of interests focused on the prime task of coastal co-management.



In Nagan Raya too it was the Panglima Laot from 5 lhoks who jointly took the initiative to set up co-management centres. Since they were the last to commence this effort they had the advantage of learning from the experiences of the other centres – both the successes and failures. They roped in the DKP at an early stage of the process. As they were initially protesting the movement of the minitrawlers of Aceh Barat into their territory, they also had close links with the marine police and navy. The MMs of the district were fairly advanced in their own efforts at networking in a district where roads to the coast were very poor. The early camaraderie among them helped in building the social bridges between the coastal communities of the five lhoks. Nagan Raya was a new district and the competences of the DKP were not very strong though they were very focused on making the co-management initiative a success.



One of the unintentional impacts of the co-management initiatives is that they will play an important role in redefining the relationship between the Panglima Laot and the larger coastal community on the one hand and the Panglima Laot and the DKP on the other. The latter has been the more difficult to negotiate as it involves sensitivities about knowledge; trust and the interplay between customary and formal power. Given that Acehnese society is more egalitarian, such sensitivities can more easily be transcended by the mere fact of inter-personal interactions. It is the opportunity for such interactions which have been provided by the co-management centres.

## PANGLIMA LAOT AND THE COASTAL COMMUNITY

The initial situation in Lhok Rigah, where the Panglima Laot was alienated from his fisher constituency, raised questions about the extent to which a Panglima Laot was, necessarily and always, the real representative of the fishing interests of the community. Were the compulsions of the post-tsunami economy and polity of Aceh taking its toll on the customary role and expectations placed on a Panglima Laot? Were younger Panglima Laot on the West coast, who were elected after the tsunami, ignorant and insensitive to the social expectations which fishers had about them? Was the diversification of Panglima Laot to other occupations such as fish trade and other service sector activities depriving them of their role as respected social and customary leaders who worked voluntarily? With respect to the Panglima Laot of Lhok Rigah the answer to the above questions were all positive. He was young and ambitious; unaware of the nuances of the customary law; and far too busy with his own non-fishing occupational pursuits (though he had his own fishing boat which gave him the eligibility to be elected by the fishers as their Panglima laot). This alienated him from his community. However, to his great credit, once this matter was drawn to his attention, he became more sensitive about his responsibility to the fishery needs of his community. Since then he has been a staunch supporter of our work.

## THE MAKING OF PEUJROH LAOT

The debate and conundrum of reviving custom without writing it down was very much part of the discussions during meetings held with the Panglima Laot. The medium of film was thought to be effective to address this issue. On this, we had the choice between making a relatively inexpensive documentary type film, or alternatively making a more expensive commercial film with the help of well known Acehnese film star group called *Eumpang Breuh*. The latter option was taken considering *Eumpang Breuh*'s appeal amongst the local audience and hence the greater chance for spread of the message which we proposed to communicate through



the film. The script for the film was discussed with academicians who were well versed with the hukum adat laot and one among them with experience in film script writing offered to produce a draft. We agreed that the focus of the script will be on the role of the Panglima Laot in conflict resolution, highlighting the mechanism of the adat court in this regard. The idea was to assert the legal authority and autonomy of the Panglima Laot in keeping with the new recognition given to customary institutions in the context of LOGA and the Qanun on Customary Institutions promulgated by the Aceh Parliament in 2009.

We intended to make the film as participatory as possible. With this in mind we had an agreement with the film's director that he would have the whole Panglima Laot team of elders cast in the film in their real role as adat court members. We also encouraged him to take on as many other people as possible from our program team, from among the MMs and officers from the DKP, Navy and Police after giving them the appropriate screen tests! The end result of this initiative was a great sense of ownership and pride about the film across the whole range of stakeholders of the co-management program.

The film was a great commercial success. Over 25,000 DVDs were sold in two months of its release. It was also selected for the International Fisheries Film Festival held in Lorient, France in March 2010. Independent assessments among the viewers in Aceh clearly indicated that it succeeded in its purpose of creating awareness about the customary adat law; the role of the Panglima Laot as its guardians; the manner of conducting an adat court to resolve conflict; and the important measures to be taken to achieve responsible fisheries in Aceh.



## PANGLIMA LAOT IN A NEW POST-TSUNAMI ACEH

The Panglima Laot continues to play a crucial role in Aceh fisheries. With the passing of the new Qanuns on Customary Institutions (9 & 10/2009) there is legal requirement for more formalization of the structure of such institutions. Since the PL has already had this experience, it will not be a major change as far as they are concerned. However, if the Panglima Laot must continue to play a major role in fisheries, it must work closer with the state and the larger community. The whole focus of the FAO co-management program was to make a beginning in fostering this new tripartite collaboration. The Panglima Laot at the lhok and province levels have collaborated wholeheartedly in making this become a reality.

In the new political and social context of post-tsunami Aceh, customary institutions need to redefine themselves if they are to retain their relevance in the sector of the economy where they are applied. With the younger generation in Aceh coming of age into a new socio-political era, the way they perceive custom, its usefulness and its relevance becomes crucial.

There is a generational divide which is slowly creeping into the Panglima Laot between the older custom friendly and fishery bound Panglima Laot and the younger Panglima Laot. The latter see their position at best as an informal responsibility to which they devote some time, whenever the situation warrants, but along with their other regular occupational pursuits. Custom no longer reigns supreme.

The Panglima Laot indirectly controls a social fund of USD 6.5 million used exclusively for the educational requirements of the children of fishers of Aceh. This fund was constituted using money obtained from the sale of Thai vessels captured by the Panglima Laot near the coast of Aceh in 2002 as well as a subsequent transfer of funds by the President of Indonesia in appreciation of the excellent functioning of this fund. The fund is well management and recently complimented by the Auditor General for its excellent functioning. However, there is competition by individuals at the Provincial level to have control over these funds. The political power, social prestige and perks associated with being at the helm of control of such a large social corpus in by no means small. Some at the helm are reluctant to give up such privileges easily.

The arrival of party politics to Aceh adds another 'identity' to all Panglima Laot. They are now not just Panglima Laot, but also become identified with a specific political party which may have approached them for their support in the elections. The divisive tendencies of party politics over custom are yet to manifest themselves in Aceh. Going by experience from other countries, such tendencies are inevitable and will soon explicitly manifest themselves in Aceh too. Once this stage is reached, the Panglima Laot of a Lhok becomes a 'vote gatherer'. This will then reflect on the Provincial Panglima Laot. Until 2007 every individual Panglima Laot was only representative of a customary organisation. Their common ideology was preservation of the spirit of the unwritten hukum adat laot. From now onwards he also represents the interests of a political party with its own ideology, political and social agenda. This new identity is likely to trump the identity of being a voluntary guardian of custom.

Some of these tensions were already visible in the Panglima Laot Congress held in January 2010. Though the lines drawn here were not between the old and the young, they were certainly a reflection of the pressures emanating from the compulsions of the new politics of Aceh and the urge to keep control over the social fund.



## **END NOTE**

The conscious strategy which FAO adopted of working contemporaneously with the local, district and the provincial levels of the Panglima Laot combined with the involvement of the Secretary-General of the Panglima Laot in the co-management initiative paid rich dividends. The involvement of the Panglima Laot at the Lhok for the selection of the MMs of their village was another key factor in fostering greater measure of ownership of the co-management program by the Panglima Laot from its very commencement. The promise that the FAO would work closely with the Panglima Laot – though not necessarily always through them – was honored. The re-focus on coastal fisheries – particularly in the rural districts of the west coast – provided an opportunity to highlight and redefine the role of the Panglima Laot with respect to his relationship to the wider fishing community.

In all the five co-management centres, the leadership of the Panglima Laot is now not restricted to their traditional constituency of the skippers and fishers, but rather to the whole coastal community. This has in large measure been facilitated by the FAO program activities.

If the idea of co-management of fisheries spreads to other districts of Aceh, then there will also be a natural redefinition of the relationship between the Panglima Laot and the DKP. This can then have an important bearing on the way the Panglima Laot see their newly emerging roles – particularly at the level of the lhok. It will also create a new networking connection between co-management centres. This will result in a new form of cooperation between Panglima Laot at the lhok level which currently does not exist.

Today, there is a 'disconnect' between the dynamics of the Province level Panglima Laot and that of the Panglima Laot at the lhok. Understandably this arises from the concept of autonomy of each lhok. However, if this new horizontal networking should happen between large numbers of lhoks, it will create a new dynamics between lhoks which will in turn alter the nature of 'up the hierarchy' pressures put on the Province level. The relative 'autonomy' which the Province Level enjoys today may be gradually altered. This can also then result in a call for a change in the composition of the candidates who currently occupy positions in the Province Level.

When these new tendencies, initiated as a result of the co-management program mesh with the emerging socio-politics of a new post-tsunami Aceh (mentioned above), there is bound to be a significant change in the way the Panglima Laot will configure themselves and their organisation. If this metamorphosis should strengthen the Panglima Laot, then it must anchor itself more in the whole coastal community and relate creatively with the emerging issues which face Aceh's marine fisheries in the near future. These issues include importantly: responsible co-management of the resources and channelling a greater share of the economic value of fish to the fishers.

FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/ 4/2010

## **Negotiating Fisheries Co-Management In Aceh, Indonesia: Working With Officers of the Department of Fisheries**

**S**uccess of any co-management initiative depends substantially on the committed involvement of the officers of the fisheries department, the main representative of the state in fisheries. The measures taken by the FAO program to make contact with these officers and to seek their involvement is composed of a series of steps which we will describe in this document. The basic approach was 'planned' at the inception of the program. However, in the process of engagement, some adaptive alterations were incorporated in the plans.

### **INITIAL CONTACTS WITH THE DKP**

Since the FAO had been involved in Aceh immediately after the tsunami, its activities and approaches were not new to the officers of the Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan (DKP). Every consultant who arrived in Banda Aceh visited the Province DKP and paid respects to the Chief. Similarly, when they went to the districts, they met with the district chiefs.

Our contact with the DKP commenced with the inception of the program in January 2007 and was formalised in March 2007 with the first inception workshop of the program. (There were preliminary contacts related to the project identification phase and pre-inception phase which were made with DKP in 2005 and 2006) The attempt in this workshop was to highlight that this new FAO program was not part of the relief and rehabilitation phase but rather in-

tended to pave the way for a transition from rehabilitation to more long term development. In this endeavor human capacity building was most important and this FAO program was intended to focus entirely on this.

In April 2007 the FAO team made their first visits to the field in order to get a more nuanced understanding of the entire fishery along the west coast. We were accompanied by the DKP officer from the Province who was in charge of the administration. His experience and knowledge of procedures helped us obtain a proper understanding of the way the local bureaucracy functions. This local knowledge of government systems is essential in any program which hopes to engage the government functionaries into it as a matter of central concern.

We traveled to the districts and met personally with the district chiefs and officers. The intention was to explain to them the objectives of the FAO program and listen to their views so that the program activities for the co-management initiative could be formulated, to the extent possible, taking into consideration their ideas and concerns. One of the distinct concerns which we were able to discern during this visit was the need to give DKP officers greater exposure to 'real contexts' where fisheries management was functioning. The purpose was to be able to see and experience, rather than only be told about the theories. Our visits also revealed that many of the officers did not have adequate education in fisheries or an understanding of its particularities when compared to agriculture. It was also evident that their exposure to the field situation in their own province was rather limited. Many pointed to the presence of the fisher organisation – Panglima Laot – as the link to the fishers, making direct contact with fisheries not very relevant or even necessary.

In these initial visits it was also very clearly revealed that the DKP's experience of contacts with the FAO (and for that matter with many other international organisations) was not necessarily very fruitful or very cordial. While it is not important to go into the details of these impressions or into their merits and demerits, it must be noted that these initial unhelpful impressions of FAO by the partner organisation (DKP) were vital for configuring future relationships. One approach was, in the manner of the culture of Acehnese society, to readily apologize for any wrong committed and give assurances of a fresh start taking all the earlier lessons to heart and head. This approach, we noticed, was productive. It helped to ease old notions and make for a new start. Combining the official visits with more informal discussions over food and drinks ( non-alcoholic) – again part of local culture – helped to establish credibility and to lay the ground for re-building trust.

## **EFFORTS TO MAKE CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS**

One of the first formal requests made by the FAO was for the Provincial Chief to attend a workshop in Siem Reap, Cambodia on small-scale fisheries organized by an international NGO which had specifically sought participation from Aceh. This was to be in May 2007. Some of the key FAO program staff and representatives of the fisher organisation Panglima Laot were also to attend this workshop making for a small multi-stakeholder delegation from Aceh. Finally, though the chief could not participate, he did send his deputy-chief

to Siem Reap. The days spent together in Siem Reap by the Acehese delegation played a significant role in developing cordial relationships and better understanding. For the DKP officer it was his first exposure to such an event and to the discussion of issues on fisheries management in an international setting.

This was followed by the first stakeholder's workshop in May 2007 which was attended by DKP officers from the districts along with representation from other stakeholder groups. The result of the initial field visits and the contacts made, helped enormously in ensuring that the discussions about the proposed activities for fisheries co-management could be

undertaken with a fair degree of assurance of cooperation from the DKP, the community and the fisher organisation.



## **LONG BREAK IN CONTACTS**

There was a long break in contact with the DKP between June 2007 and early September 2007 due to delays in the formal recruitment of many program staff. Then between September 2007 and March 2008, the activities of the program focused on the training for the community motivators and the interactions with the Panglima Laot. There was little formal contact with the DKP by the FAO co-management staff.

However, before the commencement of the community motivators training we had discussions with our 'point persons' in the DKP Province about the matter. We had sought the cooperation of the DKP in taking a class during the training where they would explain to the trainees about the functioning of the DKP.

## DISCUSSIONS ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The first formal meetings held with the DKP officers from the four districts and the Province was in March 2008. They were invited to present what they were doing for fisheries management in their respective districts. The most important revelation at the meeting was that this was the first time that officers from the districts were ever meeting together collectively to discuss an issue of common concern. The presentations also were evidence of the large gaps in basic fishery knowledge – partly because of the lack of fishery training



and partly from the lack of exposure to the real life situations in their respective districts. (This was known to us from the constant complaint of the community that they had never seen a fishery officer come to their settlement.). We discussed the idea of a study visit and exposure to a neighbouring country as a worthwhile learning experience. The suggestions from the officers for countries to be visited included Japan, Norway, Thailand, and Vietnam. When we suggested Malaysia the disappointment was evident! The rationale for suggesting Malaysia was conveyed to the officers by saying “since the language, religion and food habits were considerably the same, dedicated attention could be given to the learning process. Moreover, Malaysia was one of the few countries in Asia which had a good fisheries management system. Malaysia also was a neighbour to Aceh and there are fish stocks shared by the two over which some agreement could be reached.” There was reluctant agreement!

## STUDY TOUR OF MALAYSIA

The study tour to Malaysia was undertaken in May 2008. Fourteen fishery officers and four non-fishery state officials participated along with FAO program staff who were leading the co-management program. The chief of the district DKP and the officer in charge of capture fisheries were normally chosen for the tour. At a press event after they returned from the tour the officers highlighted three important lessons from their study tour.

First, it opened the eyes of the officers to fishery issues which had great similarity with what they confronted in Aceh. The Malaysian approaches and management solutions to these issues could be easily adopted in Aceh too. Take the example of boat registration, boat marking and boat zoning. The desirability and the feasibility of such measures were clearly evident to the officers and they understood the rationale for these measures in the context of managing the fishery. Such measures could be easily implemented at the district level. Another example was the possibility of setting up multi-purpose marine conservation areas around islands. The examples in Malaysia were an eye opener to the officers from Aceh Jaya which had many islands that could serve the same purpose.

Secondly, it resulted in a few significant 'unintended' revelations. Significant among these was the need for comprehensive fishery legislation as a foundation for taking up development and management measures. In Malaysia this was at the federal level. In Aceh this was needed at the province level, and was now feasible and necessary in the context of the new Law on Governance of Aceh (LOGA) UU11/2006. Another such unintended result of the tour was the revelation that fish trade between Aceh and Malaysia could be re-established on a direct basis and this would be a welcome move given the large Acehnese diaspora in west Malaysia with significant interest in fish trade.

Thirdly, it resulted in developing considerable camaraderie between officers from the four districts and those from the province. Being together, but outside one's usual work context ( Aceh), but within the realm of one's concerns ( fisheries) allows a person to 'stand back and reflect'. During the study tour there were many such occasions created both in a planned and spontaneous manner. It was also an excellent opportunity for the FAO program staff to get to know the officers well. This relationship building exercise was important for influencing the officer's thinking on several issues and creating a more cordial rapport between them and FAO staff.

The follow-up on the Malaysia trip resulted in support for four important activities which were part and parcel of the whole co-management initiative. First, there was the request for FAO assistance in formulation of draft provincial fisheries legislation. Secondly, the contacts with the fish traders led to developing these contacts (through another FAO project based in Banda Aceh funded by Spain) thereby strengthening the private initiatives in fish trade between Aceh and Malaysia. Thirdly, the initiative of two communities in Aceh Jaya ( the first co-management centre) for the conservation of corals and creation of a marine protected area around islands received the support of the DKP officers from Aceh Jaya who were part of the study tour. Fourthly, the support for boat registration, boat marking and zoning at the district levels were taken up in right earnest by three of the districts that participated in the tour.

## **WORKSHOP ON OFFSHORE FISHING IN SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA IN BANGKOK**

Since Aceh had borders with many other countries, the state of the Acehnese fishery is influenced by decisions made by other countries. In this context, the participation of an Acehnese delegation in a meeting on shared offshore stocks to be held in Bangkok in June 2008 was considered appropriate. The decision to sponsor the DKP Province Chief, the chief of the provincial planning body BAPPEDA and the Secretary General of the Panglima Laot to attend this meeting was deemed appropriate for them to collectively perceive the importance of the influence of offshore resources and their fishing on the overall fishery situation of the province. Many of the straddling stocks were entering the provincial waters of Aceh and were an important resource caught by the local fishers. There was the issue of illegal fishing in Aceh's waters by vessels from neighbouring countries. There was also the problem of fishers, who in the pursuit of these straddling stocks, strayed into the waters of other countries – particularly India – and were arrested. This was a problem which was constantly being handled by the Panglima Laot of Aceh. The need to examine the issues of resource management, fishing technologies and the fishing practices of the local fishermen in the overall context of the resources in the high seas, the EEZ and the territorial waters was flagged. The presentation of the Acehnese delegation at the Workshop was contextualized in the framework of the provisions of the LOGA which permits Aceh to take greater control of its natural resources compared to other provinces in Indonesia. Interestingly some questions were raised privately to the workshop organizers for having allowed a separate presentation by Aceh which was part of Indonesia!

## **ASSISTANCE IN FORMULATION OF THE PROVINCIAL SEA AND FISHERIES LAW**

In August 2008 we received a formal request from the DKP for support to the process of formulation of the provincial sea and fisheries law which was requested by the Governor. Our engagement for funding the exercise was subject to the condition that the process should be participatory with public hearings in representative places around the province where all the various stakeholders in fisheries could have their voices expressed. This was agreed and the Legal Team formulating the draft law was closely collaborating with the FAO for relevant inputs and comments. We provided them with examples of legislations and informed them about the topical concerns in international fisheries which may be appropriate to consider.

The inadequate 'fishery' content of the pre-final draft revealed that there was little 'buy-in' to the drafting process by the fisheries officers of the DKP Province. This made us aware of the manner in which tasks are undertaken by a department which such results in their own competences hardly finding expression in the final documents.

Even though this legislation was a need of the DKP as a whole, the small core group which initially handled the initiative was part of the top administration of the department. They were not the technical officers. Subsequently the initiative was seen to be the sole responsibility of that group into which others should not interfere. This is a pervasive at-

titude in the state administration because there is little individual authority given to even the senior staff. They function according to the specific requests of the chief – almost on a day to day basis. Though there are separate responsibilities specifically assigned to staff in the department, no one deems it to be his/her responsibility to proactively involve in a process which will finally affect their work – unless they are specifically asked to do so.

To rectify this situation we were compelled to approach the staff directly and make available copies of the pre-final draft and request for their technical inputs. What we finally received was of little utility mainly because of the lack of knowledge of the subject matter even on the part of the technical staff

## **COLLABORATING FOR CO-MANAGEMENT**

After the completion of the community motivator training program in August 2008 the efforts of the program were focused on the need to establish centres along the coast where the idea of co-management could be put into actual practice. Before we could zero down to specific sites, we wished to get a larger involvement and commitment for the co-management action program from all the three participating stakeholder groups -- the state, the fishers and the community. To facilitate this we organized a series of four workshops – one in each district on the theme “Working together for more responsible fisheries: Joint Action for Fisheries Co-Management in Aceh”. In each district these workshops were organized by a working committee composed of representatives of the MMs of the district, representatives of the Panglima Laot and the Head of the DKP in the district with a few of his staff. The FAO staff acted as facilitators and secretaries to the committee. Between 60 – 70 persons representing the three main stakeholders – state, fishers and community – attended each of the workshops. All the four workshops were inaugurated by the Bupati of the respective district. This was an indication of the ability of the organizing committee in communicating the importance of the meeting to the district administration.



The workshop was split into two parts. The first part was common in all the districts and the resource person from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) was arranged by the FAO. His topic was “The Meaning and Importance



of Co-Management of Fisheries in Aceh". This presentation gave the broad overview, the legal basis, the feasibility and the desirability of co-management arrangements. He reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the 'state-only' and the 'community-only' approach to fisheries management. This was then compared with the approach of co-management giving also the legal basis which could be found in the current fishery legislations in Indonesia. Since the topic was presented by a senior and well experienced officer of the MMAF, there was a certain 'credibility and authority' to the presentation. This was important, particularly for the DKP officers of the districts, who had the least exposure to the issues of co-management. The second part of the workshop discussed specific district issues concerning the fishery which required management interventions. There was also a discussion on the points which should be considered by the DKP in the formulation of the draft provincial sea and fisheries legislation. At these sessions presentations were made by the DKP chiefs, the Panglima Laot and the community motivators trained by FAO. From the list of recommendations made, two which were considered most important were chosen to be the issues from which co-management action could commence in each of the districts.

The purpose of these workshops was to induce the idea of the state, fishers and community working together. While the listing of issues for action was important, they were considered only to be indicative of the stakeholders' concerns. The workshop recommendations and the proceedings were written up and presented to the district administration by the joint organizing committee of each event. The DKP of each district took the main role in ensuring this.

## **CO-MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM**

Between August 2008 and March 2009 there were initiatives taken in Aceh Jaya, Aceh Barat and Aceh Besar to identify appropriate sites where co-management action could be concretized and bring to focus all the awareness and training on the issue which had been made by the FAO program so far. The enthusiasm and the commitment of the fishers (Panglima laot) and the community (led by the MMs) was never in doubt. With regard to the state – the DKP in particular – questions arose about the level of understanding and knowledge of the officers even about basic fishery issues -- e.g why bottom trawling was not good for the coastal eco-system; how to choose fishing gear appropriate for Aceh; why open access to the resource would lead to its destruction etc. Moreover, by this time as many as three of the district chiefs of the DKP who visited Malaysia were transferred out to other departments. There was no critical mass of individuals in the various DKPs who really understood the basics of fisheries management or could appreciate, for example, the need for greater inter-district cooperation in order to tackle the issue of banning mini-trawls – a program which was already being championed by the new chief of DKP in Aceh Barat, but without adequately understanding the full economic or socio-political ramifications of such action.

The need for greater awareness and training for a large number of the officers in the DKP across the hierarchy became very evident. The matter was discussed at the level of the Province DKP and in the DKP of Aceh Besar were fully supportive of the idea of a couple of 4-5 day trainings covering at least 50 percent of all the technical staff. This would en-

sure a critical mass of officers are made aware and receive basic training about fisheries and co-management. When only the bosses are trained or exposed to new situations, there is always the risk that they shift to other departments with the result that the investment is wasted. Moreover, there is little institutional memory in the technical departments.

The mutual discussions resulted in taking the following decisions about selection of candidates and conditions of participation:

- The training would be given only to those officers who applied for it, with their application endorsed by their respective DKP chiefs. Applicants also had to fill in a questionnaire which sought to assess their fishery knowledge. The final selection of candidates would be made on this basis.
- No special per diem would be provided for the training. Only the real costs of travel, accommodation and food would be fully covered by the FAO.
- Only those who attended every single session of training of 4 days would be given the training certificate.

Such strict norms and non-payment of per diems were considered disincentives for participation. However, FAO did not compromise on this and was willing to take the risk associated with this approach. This would ensure that only those who were really interested in the training would apply ensuring a motivated set of participants and assure good quality training.

We received 55 applications and selected 37 from among them. The analysis of the questionnaires of the selected candidates highlighted that among the five themes incorporated, the knowledge on fisheries management and small-scale coastal fisheries was inadequate. Knowledge on the marine ecosystem, fishery resource and fisheries technology was adequate. This gave an initial indication on the subjects within the training that needed to be highlighted and stressed.

The training was constituted to be a process of self-discovery of one's realms of ignorance. This was combined by participatory group learning using discussions, case study, simulation games, role-play. There were inputs from experts which were partly theory and partly an attempt to provide a framework for fisheries co-management in the 'real context of Aceh'. This was based on the analysis of the reality by the participants themselves.

The training became an intense encounter between the participants. All the FAO co-management staff were also involved in the training along with the DKP staff. Given that FAO staff had more experience and training in issues of fisheries management, they were also able to be co-facilitators in the training program by helping to give stimulus to group discussions, games etc. The

pedagogy of the training facilitated quick learning as the 'theory' and the simulations were linked to the real context of issues faced by the officers. The discovery of one's realms of ignorance without any threat to one's self esteem was an important highlight of the learning process. The use of benign group competition techniques and role play methods also enhanced the challenge and the fun of learning.

## **CO-MANAGEMENT ACTION**

The effectiveness of the training was felt immediately in the field. Between May 2009 and February 2010 the involvement of the DKP officers of the four districts in the co-management activities has been most encouraging. Though none of the chiefs participated in the training, they have been very supportive of the involvement of their staff. DKP 'co-management groups' were formed in each district and liaised closely with the FAO staff, the community motivators and the Panglima laot to identify key management issues and potential physical realms where co-management initiatives could be undertaken.

In all the four districts, the co-management centers have created their own organizational framework, institutional rules and regulations which have been endorsed by the communities, the Panglima Laot, the DKP and the district administrations. These arrangements have now become the 'models' or 'approaches' which will most likely be replicated in many centres along the coastline of the western districts. The district administrations have given special 'decisions' (Keputusan Bupati) recognizing and legalizing these co-management initiatives. The DKP of each district have formally informed the DKP Province and the MMAF about these arrangements. The District administrations have copied the notification to the Ministry of Interior in Jakarta.

In Aceh Jaya the DKP staff has taken extraordinary initiatives to work closely with the coastal community and the Panglima Laot to ensure that the first co-management centre of the FAO program becomes a good model for the rest of Aceh. The fact that officials of the MMAF from Jakarta have of their own accord been visiting the Lhok Rigah site to understand what has been happening there, speaks adequately for the success of co-management.

In Aceh Barat and Nagan Raya the DKP have taken steps to ban mini-trawling and also to convince parliament about sanctioning budgets for funding the distribution of selective fishing gear to fishers in exchange for the mini-trawls.

The co-management centre in Aceh Besar is constituted in an urban coastal space. Because the centre is a vibrant domestic tourist destination, the stakeholders constitute a much more varied group than in the other centres. The challenges of fisheries and coastal management are therefore greater. Here too, after the co-management training, a few of the DKP officers began to take more proactive interest in the activities of the centre. It is the Panglima Laot who leads the initiative.

In March 2010 the DKP of Aceh Barat, in collaboration with the district administration took the lead to call a meeting to facilitate the coordination of inter-district action against all forms of destructive fishing and for moving towards responsible fisheries. This meeting

also produced the Meulaboh Declaration which provides a 10-point charter of commitments for sustainable and responsible fisheries undertaken by all the participants. The Minister of Fisheries of Indonesia has publicly acknowledged Aceh Barat as a unique example of wise and responsible fisheries management undertaken with commitment by the state and the community.

## **END NOTE**

The work of three years (between March 2007 and March 2010) points to a gradual process whereby the relationship between DKP officers and the FAO staff, and more importantly between DKP officers and the coastal communities and the Panglima Laot, has moved from one of shared indifference to that of mutual interest and trust. The officers at the district level, by virtue of their need to interact directly with communities, have been more forthcoming and proactive in wielding their responsibilities as fishery officers. Co-management has become a new motto in which they believe. In hindsight, the cause of co-management would have been better served if the FAO had organised more basic fishery and co-management trainings in the early stages of the program – in 2008 after the Malaysia trip.

FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/ 5/2010

## Negotiating Fisheries Co-Management In Aceh, Indonesia: Is There A Role For Women?

**W**omen in coastal Aceh play an important role in village life. Unlike in many Islamic societies, they were not secluded in the four walls of their homes. Women are visible everywhere. Much of the service sector activities – the coffee shops; the restaurants; the fish processing activity; the petty trade; tailoring – are managed by the women. Women are normally the inheritors of the homes of their parents. Women are also surprisingly free in their social interactions. Their physical mobility is also considerable -- young and old ride motorbikes. Women also gather together for religious and social activities. Such associational arrangements provide an important basis for gender equality. In the post-tsunami period many of the families hold joint titles to their land and houses

### INVOLVING WOMEN

To avoid the co-management initiatives becoming totally male dominated, the FAO program took the lead, through our co-management staff and the MMs, to foster women's groups to hold discussions on the issues relating to fishery resource and coastal ecosystem management. These discussions led to the realization that women play an important part in supporting the co-management initiatives through their role in management and decision making in the household, participation in fishery related activities such as fish processing; and by undertaking a wide variety of income generating activities.



The influence of women is both direct and indirect. It is also at the individual household level and at the collective community level. Through their management of household finances, they can directly influence the individual decisions taken by their husbands on matters such as purchase of fishing equipment. Through their income generation activities they



play an indirect role in reducing the individual dependence of their husbands on informal sources of credit which are often 'exploitative'. Both these influences are positive and contribute to responsible fisheries and greater financial independence at the individual household level. At the collective level too, women who are organized can play a strong moral and supportive role in their communities towards achieving responsible fisheries through co-management approaches. The moral force of women arises from their greater concern and natural tendency for nurturing. Conservation efforts can always get a boost with the structured involvement of women – if not in the direct activity (e.g actual coral transplantation), at least in mobilizing larger community opinion about the good sense and the need for protection and nurture of such important natural resources. Women can also involve directly with activities such a coastal reforestation.

## **CONCRETE ACTIONS FOR WOMEN**



More concretely the FAO program has helped to initiate two self-help groups among the women in two of the co-management sites. The basic objective of these groups is to foster autonomous activity among the women which will give them greater occupational and financial security. From their own individual savings, the women have been able to collectively make provisions for loans among themselves

to start small businesses and to practically support their husbands to adopt more environmentally friendly fishing gear etc.

These groups have been provided with hands-on training to manage the accounts, organize meetings and proceed with financial transactions in a professional and transparent manner. In their fortnightly meetings they not only discuss about their organizational and business affairs. They also reflect on the issues of concern relating to fisheries and coastal resources. The activities of the two groups has attracted the attention of the government's financial support institution – Baitul Mal -- that disburses money collected through the various religious taxes.



Women are also represented in the five co-management centre institutions. Their experience of collective action in the self-help groups gives them an advantage when they

participate in the discussions of the co-management institutions. This is clearly evident from the salutary influence which they bring to bear by their incisive and pertinent observations and opinions in the various committees which govern the co-management realm.

## END NOTE

Women do not fish in Aceh. However, their social position in the coastal households and the relative freedom which they enjoy for undertaking their own occupations make the role that they can play in resource management a matter of significant importance. Negotiating a creative role for women in the co-management centres is therefore an important challenge.

FAO/ARC/Co-Mgt/ 6/2010

## **Negotiating Fisheries Co-Management In Aceh, Indonesia: Some Final Reflections**

### **ABOUT CO-MANAGEMENT**

- Co-management is a process, not a one time event or organizational structure.
- Co-management is impossible without mutual trust and respect among partners
- Co-management is about working with the heart and head

### **ABOUT CO-MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

- Co-management arrangements are about sharing rights and responsibilities between partners
- Co-management arrangements are about governance – the manner in which power is exercised in the management of resources
- Co-management arrangements may require facilitation from the ‘outside’ -- but it cannot be sustained without complete ownership of the process by the partners.
- Co-management arrangements require collectively agreed rules and norms of functioning; of monitoring the functions and an agreement on sanctions for breaking them
- Co-management arrangements are not static, they are dynamic and should evolve according to the need of the times
- Co-management arrangements, if they are to progress, require fostering of new knowledge and learning which emanates from the cooperative activities undertaken.
- Co-management arrangements must provide a balanced incentive structure to ensure cooperation of all partners
- Co-management arrangements function best when partners are pro-



- active about their respective functions, responsibilities and rights
- Co-management arrangements require making compromises on the differing agendas of the partners, but not on the basic values or principles

## **ABOUT FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT**

- Co-management arrangements in fisheries should emphasize more on the quality rather than the quantity of the output from the resource system
- Co-management arrangement in fisheries should lay emphasis on sustainable conservation and rejuvenation of the resource; responsible regulation of the inputs and fair allocation of the output and rent.
- Co-management arrangements in fisheries should consider fisheries in the overall context of the total ecosystem and economy

## Details of Five Co-Management Centers

### **KAWASAN PEUDHIET LAOT, ACEH JAYA DISTRICT**

#### **FOCUS OF CO-MANAGEMENT WORK**

Mapping and protection of small islands; creating of fish sanctuary; replantation of corals; protection of small island ecosystem; planting mangroves;

#### **COVERAGE AND PARTICIPATION**

**Centre Details:** 1 lhok; 10 villages; 25 km coastline  
**People:** 171 active fishers; 3328 population  
**Facilitators:** 1 Panglima Laot; 7 community motivators; 2 DKP

### **KAWASAN PEUJROH LAOT, ACEH BARAT DISTRICT**

#### **FOCUS OF CO-MANAGEMENT WORK**

Propagating merits of selective fishing; taking the political and moral initiative against mini-trawling; fostering more gender balance to support responsible fisheries

#### **COVERAGE AND PARTICIPATION**

**Centre Details:** 2 lhok; 8 villages; 8 km coastline  
**People:** 1031 active fishers; 8930 population  
**Facilitators:** 2 Panglima Laot; 4 community motivators; 4 DKP



### **KAWASAN RAMAH LINGKUNGAN, ACEH JAYA DISTRICT**

#### **FOCUS OF CO-MANAGEMENT WORK**

Mapping and protection of the bay; creating of fish sanctuary; replantation of corals; planting mangroves; regulation of fishing; women's support activity

#### **COVERAGE AND PARTICIPATION**

**Centre Details:** 2 lhok; 5 villages; 9 km coastline  
**People:** 378 active fishers; 4690 population  
**Facilitators:** 2 Panglima Laot; 5 community motivators; 2 DKP

### **KAWASAN BINA BAHARI, ACEH BESAR DISTRICT**

#### **FOCUS OF CO-MANAGEMENT WORK**

Leading the way to achieve multi-stakeholder interests in sea and coastal ecosystem in peri-urban setting; fishing; tourism; livestock rearing; coastal afforestation; industry

#### **COVERAGE AND PARTICIPATION**

**Centre Details:** 1 lhok; 5 villages; 2 km coastline  
**People:** 70 active fishers; 1684 population  
**Facilitators:** 1 Panglima Laot; 3 community motivators; 2 DKP

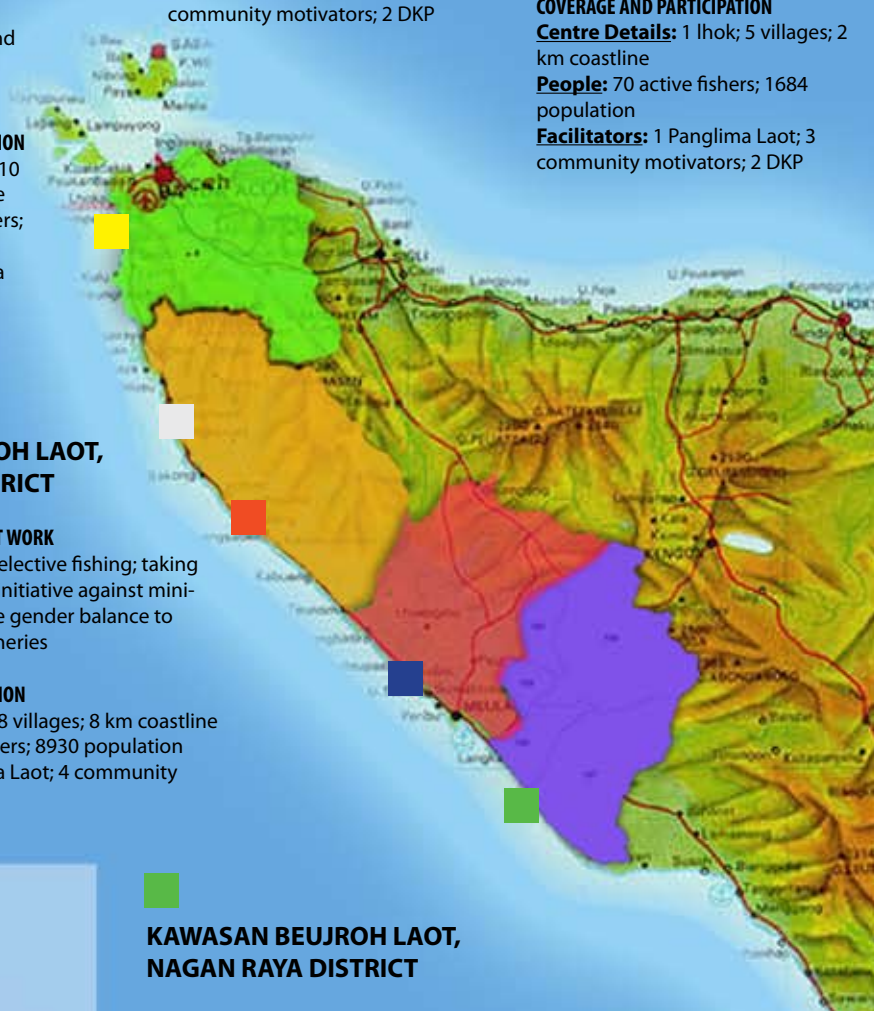
### **KAWASAN BEUJROH LAOT, NAGAN RAYA DISTRICT**

#### **FOCUS OF CO-MANAGEMENT WORK**

Active community surveillance against illegal fishing; moving towards small-scale selective fishing; coastal afforestation;

#### **COVERAGE AND PARTICIPATION**

**Centre Details:** 5 lhok; 10 villages; 35 km coastline  
**People:** 445 active fishers; 7367 population  
**Facilitators:** 5 Panglima Laot; 10 community motivators; 4 DKP







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AFFECTED BY THE TSUNAMI IN ACEH PROVINCE

